

C. # 1854

Evidentiary Document # 5313

HUGH JOSEPH WEBSTER.

VX23821, PRIVATE HUGH JOSEPH WEBSTER, 2/22nd Battalion, D Company, being duly sworn, states:-

I am VX23821, Private Hugh Joseph Webster, 2/22nd Battalion, D Company.

I went to RABAU with the 2/22 Battalion and was there till after the Japanese landing.

After the Japanese landing the Company retired into the bush and I went with it, and I made my way down to the South Coast with other members of the Battalion.

We arrived in the vicinity of TOL about February the 3rd, in the late afternoon. There were eight in our party, all of the 2/22.

On arrival at TOL we set about trying to get some food. We got a sheep and a bit of corn and cooked it. We slept the night in a native hut in the TOL Plantation. There were eight of us in the hut.

Next morning we ate for breakfast what food was left from the night before, and lay down again. There was a river ahead, and we were trying to organise a crossing of the river. While we were lying on the bunks there was a bit of a commotion outside. We went out to have a look and looked out to sea and could see sampans out in the Bay. We packed all our stuff in a hurry and went into the bush again. On the way to the bush we heard a type of mortar firing. We slept in the bush on the night of the 4th.

In the morning, it was our idea that the Japs would not stay long, so we posted two sentries to watch the Japs at the native huts. The sentries came rushing back and said a Japanese patrol was coming up. The patrol surrounded us and took us prisoners. We had picked up three more men by this time and were a party of eleven, and the only arms in the party was a revolver carried by Cpl. Walker. The Japs surrounded us and took us prisoner at about 9 or 10 in the morning. They made a search of the surrounding bush to see if there were any more and then took us to Japanese headquarters at WAITAVLO.

There was only our party at the Japanese headquarters at WAITAVLO at the time. There they gave us two sheets of paper. We had to sign our names and numbers twice. They took our identification discs from us and also all our personal belongings. Then they tied our hands behind our backs with rope and marched us just up behind WAITAVLO House, about 200 yards. There was a big group of Japanese at the Headquarters, cleaning machine guns and rifles and doing odd jobs and the Japanese that went with us behind WAITAVLO House numbered between 20 and 30.

There was a bit of cliff and they lined us up along that. They would not let us face them. We were not linked together. They then opened on us with rifles and light machine guns. I was wounded in the arm and side and fell down and lost consciousness.

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H.J. Webster. (cont.)

I eventually recovered consciousness, and the Japs had gone. On recovering consciousness, I definitely saw the other ten of my mates lying there on the ground. I examined them and found that Private Walkley was still alive. I got him to his feet and he and I went down into a bit of a gully. We were there for about three days. We then decided to set off, and we went through the thick bush. Walkley was in pretty bad condition. I was going ahead and missed him. I came back to find him, sang out and looked for him, but I was not able to find him at all and I thought he must have died in the bush.

I then went on by myself. While going on by myself I had only gone a short distance when I came on a number of bodies of other victims. I could not say definitely the number but, on a rough estimate, there would be about eight or nine. They were covered with coconut fronds. They were definitely Australian troops. I did not see them sufficiently to identify them.

I was eventually picked up by a party with Col. Scanlon and ultimately came out on the south coast with Major Palmer and Major Owen. I made a quick recovery from my bullet wounds.

I did not see anything which might have given the Japanese any ground for attack on our party. We were an unarmed party as far as they were concerned. We even throw away the revolver before they came up.

There was a Japanese officer who spoke English. I did not see any officer with them dressed in Australian uniform. There were local natives working for the Japanese at the headquarters.

I have given the names of my party to Records.

The evidence is read over to the witness.

(Sgd.) HUGH J. WEBSTER.

Certified true copy.

*T. F. McNamee*  
.....Lieut. Col.  
Australian Military Forces.

証書類第五三一三號

ヒュ一。デヨセフ。ウエブスター

第二／三二大隊、D中隊ノVX二三、八二二號、「ヒュ一。デヨセフ。ウエブスター」兵卒ハ、正式宣誓ノ上、次ノ如ク陳述ス。

私ハ第二／三二大隊、D中隊ノVX二三、八二二號、「ヒュ一。デヨセフ。ウエブスター」兵卒デアリマス。私ハ第二／三二大隊所屬デ「ラベウル」ニ行キ、日本軍ノ上陸迄同所ニ居リマシタ。

日本軍ノ上陸後、中隊ハ密林中ニ退却シ、私モ中隊ト行動ヲ共ニシ、ソレカラ大隊ノ者ト共ニ、南岸ヘ下リマシタ。

我々ハ、二月三日頃午后退ク「トル」附近ニ到着シマシタ。我々ノ一行ハ八人デ、皆第二／三二大隊ノ者デアリマシタ。

「トル」ニ到着スルヤ、我々ハ食糧獲得ニ着手シマシタ。我々ハ羊ト少シ許リノ玉蜀黍ヲ手ニ入レ、ソレヲ料理シマシタ。我々ハ「トル」農園ノ原住民小屋デ其ノ夜ハ眠リマシタ。小屋ニハ我々八人が居ツタノデス。

翌朝、我々ハ昨夜食べ残シタ食物ヲ朝食ニシ、ソシテ再ビ横ニナリマシタ。前方ニ川ガアリ、我

々ハソノ川ヲ渡ル工夫ヲシヨウトシマシタ。寢床ニ横臥シテ居ルト、外デ少々騒ギガシマシタノデ、様子ヲ見ヨウト外ヘ出テ、海ノ方ヲ見渡シマス、湾内ニ「サンバン」ガハツキリ眼ニ入りマシタ。我々ハ急イデ一切ノ荷物ヲ一マトメニシ、再ビ密林中ニ入りマシタ。密林ニ赴ク途中デ、我々ハ白砲ヲ撃ツタラシイ音ヲ聞キマシタ。我々ハ四日ノ夜ハ、密林中デ眠リマシタ。

朝、日本軍ハ、長ク留ル事ハアルマイ、ト考エテ、我々ハ原住民小屋ニキタ日本軍監視ノタメ、二名ノ歩哨ヲ配置シマシタ。歩哨ハ走り戻ツテ來テ、日本兵斥候隊ガヤツテ來ルト言イマシタ。其ノ斥候ガ我々ヲ包圍シ、捕虜トシタノデアリマス。此ノ時迄ニ、我々ハ、尙三人ヲ加エテ居マシタノデ、一行ハ十一人デアリマシタ。ソシテ我々一行中ノ唯一ノ武器ハ「ウオーカー」伍長ノ携行スル拳銃デアリマシタ。日本兵ハ我々ヲ包圍シ、其ノ朝ノ九時カ十時頃、我々ヲ捕虜トシタノデアリマス。彼等ハ、未ダ居リハセヌカヲ調ベルタメ、周圍ノ密林ノ搜索ヲ行ヒ、然ル後、我々ヲ「ワイタヴロ」ノ日本軍司令部ニ連行シマシタ。

其ノ時ニハ、「ワイタヴロ」ノ日本軍司令部ニハ、我々一行ノミシカ居リマセンデシタ。其處デ彼等ハ、我々ニ二枚ノ紙ヲ渡シマシタ。我々ハ我

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々ノ如前ト番號ヲ二度看石セネバナリマセシ  
タ。彼等ハ我々カラ認識票ヲ奪ヒ、私物一切ヲ沒  
收シマシタ。ソレカラ彼等ハ網デ、我々ヲ後手ニ  
縛リ、「ワイタザロ」邸宅ノ向フ迄約二百ヤード  
ヲ達シテ行キマシタ。司令部ニハ日本兵ガ澤山居  
リ、機關銃ヤ小銃ヲ掃除シタリ、其他何ヤ彼ヤト  
仕事ヲシテ居リ、我々ト一緒ニ「ワイタザロ」邸  
宅ノ向フヘ來タ日本兵ハ、二十人カラ三十人ヲ數  
エマシタ。

少シ絶壁ニナツタ所ガアリ、彼等ハソノ絶壁ニ  
沿ツテ我々ヲ整列サセマシタ。彼等ハ我々ヲ彼等  
ト向イ合セズ、我々ハ一緒ニ集ガレハシマセンデ  
シタ。ソレカラ彼等ハ、我々ニ對シテ、小銃ト輕  
機銃ヲ發射シマシタ。私ハ腹ト横腹ニ負傷シテ倒  
レ、意識ヲ失ヒマシタ。

私ハ終ニ意識ヲ回復シマシタ。日本兵ハ既ニ去  
ツテ居リマシタ。意識ノ回復スルヤ、私ハ地上ニ  
横タハツテキル他ノ十人ノ战友ヲハツキリト見マ  
シタ。私ハ彼等ノ生死ヲ檢ベマシタ。ソシテ「ウ  
オークリ」兵卒ガ未ダ生キテキル事ヲ知リマシ  
タ。私ハ彼ヲ立たセ、彼ト私ハ小サナ谷ニ下リマ  
シタ。我々ハ三日許リ其處ニ居リマシタ。ソレカ  
ラ我々ハ、去ラント決心シ、深イ密林ヘ入リマシ  
タ。「ウオークリ」ノ体ノ調子ハカナリ悪カツ



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タノデス。私ハ先ニ立ツテ歩イテキル中ニ彼ヲ見失ヒマシタ。私ハ彼ヲ探シニ戻リ、大聲デ呼ビ、探シ求メマシタガ、遂ニ見付ケ出スコトガ出来ズ私ハ彼ガ密林中デ死ンダニ違イナイト思ヒマシタ。

ソレカラハ私ハ只一人デ行キマシタ。只一人デ歩イテキル時、餘リ遠ク行カナイ中ニ、私ハ他ノ犠牲者ノ幾ツカノ死体ニ遭遇シマシタ。ハツキリト其ノ数ヲ言フ事ハ出来マセンガ、大体ノ見積リデハ、八、九人デアリマシタ。其ノ死体ハ椰子ノ葉デ蔽ハレテアリマシタ。彼等ハ明カニ「オーストラリア」軍ノ兵デシタ。私ハ彼等ヲ識別スルタメニ充分ニ死体ヲ見マセンデシタ。私ハ終ニ「スキヤンロン」大佐ノ一隊ニ救ハレ、結局、「バルマー」少佐及ビ「オーエン」少佐ト共ニ南岸ニ辿リ着キマシタ。私ノ受ケタ弾傷ハ、遠カニ回復シマシタ。

私ハ、我々一行ヲ攻撃スル何カノ理由ヲ日本軍ニ與エタヨウナ事ハ一切覺エマセンデシタ。我々ハ彼等ニ取ツテハ、非武装隊デシタ。我々ハ彼等ノ來ル以前ニ、拳銃サエ放棄シテシマツタノデス。

英語ヲ話ス日本軍將校ガ居リマシタ。私ハ「オーストラリア」軍ノ制服ヲ着タ將校ヲ、彼等ノ中ニ一人モ見マセンデシタ。司令部デハ、日本軍ノタメニ何ラク地方原住民ガ居リマシタ。

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私ハ、私ノ一行ノ姓名ヲ記録係リニ届ケマシタ。

記録係ニ對シテ詢問カセラレタリ。

ヒュー・J・ウェスター (署名)

眞實ナル寫本ナルコトヲ證明ス

添加 陸軍中佐 T. F. モーネイン / 署名 /